

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 06261 191602Z
ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8339

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 6261

STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR M AND AF FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AMGT
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF DECISION TO DOWNGRADE
NAIROBI TO CLASS III POST

REF: 2 FAM 460

1. I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN AT COM CONFERENCE IN ABIDJAN THAT NAIROBI, WHICH WE HAD THOUGHT WOULD SOON QUALIFY FOR CLASS I EMBASSY STATUS, HAS IN FACT BEEN DOWNGRADED TO CLASS III. MY FOUR YEARS OF SERVICE AT THIS POST LEAD ME TO REQUEST URGENT RECONSIDERATION OF THIS DECISION ON GROUNDS THAT CURRENT U.S. INTERESTS IN KENYA WOULD BE INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED BY A CLASS III MISSION. SET FORTH IN FOLLOWING PARAS ARE IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF NAIROBI WHICH WE FEEL MAY HAVE BEEN GIVEN INSUFFICIENT WEIGHT IN DELIBERATIONS WHICH LED TO DOWNGRADING OF THIS POST.
 2. ECONOMIC INTERESTS. ASIDE FROM RAPIDLY GROWING US PRIVATE INVESTMENT (NOW OVER DOLS 200 MILLION), AID IS GEARING UP FOR A LARGE DOLS 30 MILLION FY-78 ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PEACE CORPS PROGRAM WITH NEARLY 300 PCV'S.
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PAGE 02 NAIROB 06261 191602Z

3. MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE. OVERALL MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF KENYA TO US MAY NOW WELL EXCEED THAT OF ANY OTHER AF COUNTRY. A DOLS 70 MILLION PROGRAM TO SUPPLY KENYA WITH SQUADRON OF F-5E/F AIRCRAFT AND RELATED TRAINING IS FULLY ON SCHEDULE. MOREOVER, PORT OF MOMBASA CONTINUES TO RECEIVE WARMLY LARGE AND NUMEROUS VISITS

BY US NAVY VESSELS FROM PACFLT AS WELL AS MIDEASTFOR.
IN ADDITION, KENYAN GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY AUTHORIZED
OCCASIONAL P-3 FLIGHTS TO AND FROM KENYA.

4. MANAGEMENT SIGNIFICANCE. WHILE WE ARE NOT IN
POSSESSION OF DETAILED ADMINISTRATIVE DATA ON ALL
OTHER AF POSTS, THIS MISSION IS NOW UP TO A TOTAL OF
160 DIRECT-HIRE AMERICANS AND NEARLY 200 LOCAL EMPLOYEES,
WHICH MUST MAKE IT CLOSE TO BEING LARGEST POST IN AF.
TO EXTENT VOLUME OF TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS REFLECTS
OVERALL VOLUME OF POST ACTIVITY, NAIROBI TRAFFIC
PROBABLY EXCEEDS THAT OF ANY OTHER AF POST, INCLUDING
LAGOS, ACCORDING TO INCOMPLETE DATA AVAILABLE HERE.

5. PERSONNEL IMBALANCE AMONG AGENCIES WITHIN MISSION.
ASSUMING THAT GRADE STRUCTURE OF STATE PORTION OF
EMBASSY WOULD OVER TIME BE REDUCED TO THAT OF TYPICAL
CLASS III POST, A LARGE AND AWKWARD DISCREPANCY WOULD
RESULT BETWEEN GRADE STRUCTURE OF EMBASSY AND THAT OF
OTHER AGENCIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE NOW IN MISSION'S
AID AND USIS COMPONENTS: TWO CLASS I OFFICERS, 10
CLASS II OFFICERS, AND 23 CLASS III OFFICERS. PITTEED
AGAINST THIS IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF RANK, ASIDE FROM
AMBASSADR, WOULD BE ONE FSO-3 DCM, PRESUMABLY ASSISTED
BY SECTION CHIEFS AT FSO-4 LEVEL. THIS IS PROBLEM
WHICH IS PRESUMABLY NOT SHARED TO SAME DEGREE BY
EUROPEAN POSTS WHICH HAVE NO AID MISSIONS.

6. REQUIREMENTS OF COUNTRY SITUATION. WHILE DAY-TO-
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PAGE 03 NAIROB 06261 191602Z

DAY CONDUCT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH KENYA HAVE BEEN
RELATIVELY PROBLEM FREE IN RECENT YEARS, WE ANTICIPATE
THAT STRONG LEADERSHIP BY AMBASSADOR AND SENIOR STAFF
OF EMBASSY WILL BE CRUCIAL TO US INTERESTS DURING
INEVITABLE TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP FROM AGING PRESIDENT
KENYATTA TO SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT. AN ADDITIONAL VERY
DIFFERENT BUT IMPORTANT BURDEN IS IMPOSED ON AMBASSADOR
BY HIS ACCREDITATION TO SEYCHELLES AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY
FOR SUPERVISING SMALL RESIDENT EMBASSY THERE. FINALLY,
AS IT GRADUALLY BECOMES APPARENT THAT WE ARE DOWNGRADING
MISSION, KENYAN GOVERNMENT WILL TEND TO INTERPRET THIS
AS SIGNALING A DECLINE IN U.S. INTEREST IN KENYA.
IN CONCLUSION, IT IS MY VIEW THAT WE MUST AT LEAST
MAINTAIN NAIROBI AS A CLASS II POST IF WE ARE TO
PROTECT AND ADVANCE OUR SIGNIFICANT OVERALL INTERESTS
IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN THIS PART OF AFRICA.

7. PLEASE ADVISE.
LINDSTROM

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